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Report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-sixth executive session

Corrigendum

For the existing footnote *substitute*

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-sixth executive session, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3 and 4 December 2012. It will appear in final form, together with the reports of the twenty-seventh special session, the fifty-seventh executive session and the sixtieth session of the Board, as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 15 (A/68/15)*.

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Sixth-eighth session

Report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-sixth executive session*

Geneva, 3 and 4 December 2012

Addendum

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Introduction

At its fifty-sixth executive session, the Trade and Development Board decided that once the terms of reference for all expert meetings had been approved by the Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on its behalf, a full set of terms of reference would be published in a single document as an addendum to the report of the fifty-sixth executive session of the Board.

The present addendum encompasses those terms of reference that have been approved by the Trade and Development Board or approved by the Bureau under delegated authority as of the date of publication of the present document. As some terms of reference for multi-year expert meetings have not been finalized, a second addendum will be issued when the remaining terms of reference have been completed and approved.

A draft of this addendum was presented as a non-paper and approved by the Bureau during the Consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board on 19 February 2013.

I. Terms of reference for multi-year expert meetings

A. Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development[1]

1. The Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development will form a continuation of the pre-Doha multi-year expert meetings on investment for development and on enterprise development policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation (STI) by expanding the scope of the expert deliberation to the new topics of the Doha Mandate and applying the outcome tools of the previous multi-year expert meetings to these new topics, namely the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and the Framework for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy.

(a) Investment for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development: The Regional Context (January 2013)

2. The link between productive capacity-building and regional integration is an essential component of today's strategies aiming at achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development. The expert group meeting will analyse the impact of regional integration, including subregional, regional and interregional initiatives, on investment flows and the integrating effects of regional investment clusters, and draw best practice policy lessons, including with regard to regional investment agreements, regional investment promotion and related sustainable development implications. (Doha Mandate, para. 65 (a), (b), (g) and (m)).

(b) Innovation for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development: Policy Frameworks, Instruments and Key Capabilities (April 2014)

3. The experts will discuss how developing countries can establish innovation policies adapted to their specific needs and environment. Attention will be paid in particular to the capabilities that developing countries can concentrate on as a priority for better innovation performance at the firm and at the economy-wide levels and to the role that regional and interregional cooperation can play in the development of capabilities relating to STI. The experience of developing countries with various innovation policy instruments (for example, innovation funding, fiscal incentives, technology parks and incubators, public-private partnerships and business-academia collaboration), and the linkages that should be developed with other policy areas will also be discussed. In this context, the role of global value chains in making STI capacity an instrument for supporting national development, helping local industry become more competitive and for developing export diversification efforts of developing countries (Doha Mandate, para. 56 (p)) will be analysed.

[1] The terms of reference for this multi-year expert meeting were approved by the Extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on 31 October 2012.

(c) Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development (January 2015)

4. The meeting will address the various technical dimensions of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and analyse the nexus between entrepreneurship and productive capacity. Building on an assessment of existing developing countries' capacity strengths, the meeting will examine implementation in each area of the framework, including national entrepreneurship strategies, entrepreneurship policy road maps, their monitoring and evaluation, and the regional dimensions of the Framework (Doha Mandate, para. 65 (a), (g) and (m)).

(d) Wrap-up (December 2015)

5. The fourth session of the expert meeting will bring together the findings of the three preceding meetings, with a view towards refining UNCTAD's Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Framework.

B. Commodities and Development[2]

1. Background

6. Commodities production and trade sustain the livelihoods of billions of people in the developing world, and commodities constitute essential inputs for a wide range of economic activities. Commodities also provide export revenues and employment, and contribute to poverty reduction. In value terms, they account for more than half of most developing countries' total merchandise exports. Therefore, major changes in international commodity markets have a direct impact on the economic performance of commodity-dependent developing countries (CDDCs), and on the well-being of their populations. For some countries, commodity dependence has been associated with poor economic performance.

7. Following decades of largely stagnating or falling prices, most commodities experienced rapidly rising prices from about 2003, except for the brief periods in late 2008 and 2009. However, this has not translated into inclusive growth and sustainable development in the majority of CDDCs for a variety of reasons.

8. Appropriate policy measures are, therefore, needed at all levels to strengthen export competitiveness; promote economic diversification, value addition, agricultural production and food security; and reduce poverty in CDDCs.

2. Objective

9. The objective of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development is to enable CDDCs to harness development gains from the integration of global markets and commodities trade and to address the commodities problematique, including the impact of commodity price volatility on vulnerable groups, so that they can meet internationally agreed development goals (e.g. Millennium Development Goals) and formulate sustainable and inclusive development strategies that promote economic diversification and value addition, and reduce poverty.

[2] The terms of reference were approved (except for the fourth session) at the Extended Bureau meeting on 30 November 2012. The fourth session was approved at the fifty-sixth executive session of the Trade and Development Board on 4 December 2012.

3. Main issues

10. The multi-year expert meeting will:

(a) Monitor the developments, opportunities and challenges in commodity markets, giving due attention to those commodity sectors that are relevant to CDDCs.

Fifth session — March 2013

(b) Review policies and strategies that propel commodities as an engine of sustainable and inclusive growth and development. In this context, the expert meeting would critically look at the following issues:

(i) Policy options that increase the participation of value chains; improve diversification, value addition and standards compliance; improve competitiveness, including managerial acumen and marketing skills; reduce transaction costs along commodity supply chains; and increase returns;

(ii) Policy tools that support CDDCs and improve institutional capacity-building, governance and transparency, research and development, agricultural extension services and training, commodity finance (including warehouse receipt systems) and market information services.

Sixth session — 2014

(c) Review and identify opportunities for commodity-based trade and development, with a focus on natural resources sectors — energy (oil and gas), and minerals and metals — with key issues relating to the energy matrix, including renewable energies; the capture of resource rents and their use for broad-based development (e.g. future generation fund, fiscal (taxation) regimes and sovereign wealth funds); and the integration of natural resources sectors in broad-based national development policies and strategies.

Seventh session — 2015

(d) Review and identify policy actions to mitigate the negative impact of growing volatility and price swings in commodity markets on global food security and economic welfare, so as to improve market functioning and countries' resilience to shocks; and increase access to market intelligence and financial resources, and market access for CDDCs.

Eighth session — 2016[3]

(e) Review and evaluate UNCTAD activities to assist CDDCs, in the light of internationally agreed development goals, as appropriate, including efforts to strengthen commodity production; improve food security and export competitiveness, taking into account the needs of small-scale producers, family, farms, women and youth, in their efforts to increase gains from commodity production and trade; address the negative impact of volatility in commodity markets and integrate sustainable and inclusive growth and development strategies into national policies.

11. In carrying out this work under the multi-year expert meeting, appropriate coordination will be undertaken, within UNCTAD's mandate, with relevant international, regional and other actors, including international commodity bodies that are already active in this area.

[3] See footnote 2.

4. Expected outcomes

12. The Multi-year Meeting on Commodities and Development will provide a forum:

(a) For sharing country experiences with regard to benefiting and ensuring development gains from the commodity economy, particularly in commodity sectors that have experienced near-record highs prices in the past couple of years;

(b) For examining ways and means to assist countries in dealing with long-standing challenges of commodity dependence, including overcoming difficulties in diversification, value addition, inefficiencies in supply-side capacities, volatile commodity prices, and Dutch Disease and governance issues in natural resource sectors;

(c) For learning from success stories in commodity trade, and identify practical options and actionable outcomes for addressing at all levels the opportunities and challenges of long-standing commodity trade and development issues. Such options and outcomes may be in the form of inventories of best practices such as family farming, checklists and indicative guidelines, sets of criteria or principles, and model frameworks;

(d) For reviewing and evaluating UNCTAD's contribution to assisting developing countries in the area of commodities trade and development.

5. Target experts

13. The multi-year expert meeting will serve as a forum on the interface between commodities trade and development that is sustainable and inclusive. Country experts should be nominated from government ministries and agencies dealing with commodities and agrifoods trade, and natural resources (e.g. minerals and metals, oil and gas), as well as from the private sector, including representatives of producer organizations (e.g. cooperatives), and practitioners from the industry, research institutions and civil society organizations.

C. Trade, Services and Development[4]

1. Background

14. The services economy is important for the expansion of trade, productivity and competitiveness, and for the provision of essential services and universal access. Thus the development of and access to services, supported by adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks, are important for sound socioeconomic development. The multi-year expert meeting will build upon the previous multi-year expert meetings to address the issues of regulation and institutions in the development of the services sector, including infrastructure services.

2. Objective

15. The objective of the expert meeting is to identify best-fit practices at the levels of policymaking, regulations, institutions and trade negotiations, linking services, trade and development in a balanced manner, including strengthening national services regulation without creating trade barriers. This objective will be pursued through an exchange of experiences and lessons learned so as to assist developing countries, particularly least

[4] These terms of reference were approved during the fifty-sixth executive session of the Trade and Development Board, held from 3 to 4 December 2012.

developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to establish and strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks and cooperative mechanisms with a view to enhancing their services supply and trade capacity, and the efficiency and competitiveness of the services sector.

3. Main issues

16. The multi-year expert meeting will deal with the following issues:

(a) Case studies on building regulatory and institutional competence with a focus on factors leading to success and lessons learned (year 2013) so as to address the bottlenecks of supply capacity in building services in developing countries;

(b) Services sectors' regulatory and institutional frameworks and liberalization at the regional level, and how parties to regional trade agreements negotiate joint infrastructure services provisions and regulations (e.g. energy, transport, financial services and services relating to information and communications technologies) (year 2014);

(c) Possible elements for the preparation of a toolkit consisting of a set of best-fit practices, organized by sectors, from which developing countries could extract information applicable to their own countries and circumstances, that could assist them in enhancing efficient and effective regulations and institutions (year 2015);

(d) The interface between trade agreements and the domestic regulation of services, including infrastructure services and professional services;

(e) Coherence between regulation and trade liberalization by examining practices and experiences in building coordination and coherence between trade negotiators, policymakers and regulators, and making regulatory and trade agendas mutually supportive in services sectors (year 2016);

(f) Sharing of best practices to strengthen national services regulation without creating trade barriers.

4. Expected outcome

17. The expert meeting will contribute to the following outcomes:

(a) Identifying policy recommendations and best-fit practices to improve regulations and institutions in a manner conducive to the development of relevant services sectors;

(b) Supporting policymakers, regulators and trade negotiators to enhance synergies in adopting a holistic approach in sectoral development policies, regulation and institutions, and in undertaking liberalization commitments in services sectors;

(c) Identifying areas for deeper research and analysis on issues relevant to services development;

(d) Further strengthening the existing network of services experts from different countries.

5. Target participants

18. Experts to be invited to the multi-year expert meeting will include those from government ministries and agencies dealing with trade, trade negotiations, policymaking and regulations of specific services sectors, research institutions, civil society and the private sector, including coalitions and associations of services industries.

D. Promoting Economic Integration and Cooperation[5]

(a) Supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration: the role of public and private sectors

First session — April 2013

1. Background

19. Infrastructure development has the power to foster intraregional trade, thereby creating regional markets, and in the process help accelerate growth and reduce poverty. Together with expanded demand, it can also encourage supply diversification, regional economic convergence and inequality reduction. Promoting regional infrastructure, however, is a multifaceted task that typically requires large-scale funding involving complex financial engineering, an appropriate regulatory framework and above all human, technical and institutional capacities.

2. Objective

20. The objective of this meeting is to explore the role of different partnership initiatives and cooperation mechanisms in supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration among developing countries. Specifically, it aims to bring together representatives of both the public and private sectors in order to learn what initiatives and mechanisms have worked successfully in recent years, as well as which ones have come short of meeting in full their expected results.

3. Main issues

21. Support for infrastructure development may take different forms. This meeting intends to focus on three specific initiatives and mechanisms which have informed discussions of development cooperation in this area: privatization, public-private partnerships (PPPs) and financing from regional development banks (RDBs). Actors involved in each of these initiatives are expected to bring to the meeting their own perspective in connection with their particular areas of expertise, helping us move closer to a more rounded view of the challenges facing cross-border infrastructure development.

22. Privatization has been widely undertaken around the world in the past 30 years to enhance enterprise performance, improve quality in services delivery, increase access and, at the macro level, generate fiscal gains. A good deal of development cooperation has aimed to promote this trend. PPPs, particularly for financing long-term infrastructure projects, have been considered as a possible alternative where the State lacks the resources in sufficient amounts to undertake such projects, and there is no guarantee that the private sector will do so. PPPs have also been promoted as a means to scale up investment in public infrastructure and help the State to overcome capacity constraints in project design, construction and operation. Finally, through PPPs, the risks can be partially transferred to the private partner that is better able to manage them (e.g. interest rate risk, due to access to international capital markets or hedging). The record of PPPs, particularly in the context of cross-border infrastructure projects, has not yet been fully examined and the meeting can provide a venue for that initial discussion.

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[5] The terms of reference for this session of the multi-year expert meeting were approved at the informal Consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board with Regional Coordinators on 31 January 2013.

23. In previous expert meetings, the general role that RDBs have played in mobilizing resources for development projects in developing countries has been discussed. This meeting aims to focus the discussion on their specific role in providing finance for large, cross-border infrastructure projects. These banks have the ability to put together complex financing packages that include private sources of finance, which alone do not reach such projects due to externalities and the level of risks involved. The purpose of the meeting is to learn from accounts about successful experiences, including through the participation of RDBs in PPPs.

24. The questions that will be addressed by the experts include: What sorts of PPPs modalities (e.g. service contracts, operation and management, design-build-finance-operate) are most conducive to successful outcomes, and for what categories of countries? What factors have been identified as playing a determinant role in successful stories, and what has been identified as causes of failure? What are the main obstacles and constraints to PPP opportunities — legal, technical, risk (financial, political)? What are the possibilities for scaling-up regional financing mechanisms to undertake infrastructure development?

25. The meeting will be organized in April 2013. It will serve as a forum, bringing together experts to engage with each other and with delegations attending the meeting.

4. Expected outcomes

26. The possible outcomes of the multi-year expert meeting on "Supporting infrastructure development to promote economic integration: the role of public and private sectors" might include:

(a) Enhanced understanding of different initiatives and mechanisms in support of regional infrastructure projects for sustainable growth and development;

(b) Identification of the critical factors behind successful experiences and of the causes of disappointing results. This will help inform policy and, hopefully, lead to more positive outcomes;

(c) Identification of key constraints facing different categories of developing countries, and understanding of what role more resourceful developing countries can play at the regional level;

(d) Exchange of experiences and lessons in promoting regional integration through regional infrastructure development.

E. Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development

(a) Prospects for building resilience to external shocks and mitigating their impact on trade and development

First session — April 2013[6]

1. Background

27. Better economic performance by developing countries than by developed countries has been a feature of the world economy over the past several years. A lower

[6] The terms of reference for the first session of this multi-year expert meeting were approved at the informal Consultations of the President of the Trade and Development Board with Regional Coordinators on 31 January 2013.

incidence of external shocks, combined with domestic policy changes that improved developing countries' resilience to external shocks, explain this performance. However, the global enabling economic environment remains fraught with uncertainties and downside risks. To guard against such uncertainties and risks, countries need to enhance resilience to potential external shocks with a view to mitigating adverse impacts on trade and development.

2. Objective

28. The objective of this session of the multi-year expert meeting is to allow an exchange of views, experiences and lessons learned regarding external shocks, in the context of building resilience and mitigating their adverse impacts on trade and development.

3. Main issues

29. Issues that may be addressed in this session of the multi-year expert meeting include:

(a) Understanding external shocks affecting trade and development, in the context of building resilience;

(b) Measures needed to foster policy buffers to build resilience to external shocks;

(c) The role of the enabling economic environment at all levels in supporting resilience building;

(d) Best practices and challenges in collecting and using statistics on international trade and development, to build resilience to external shocks.

30. The session will be organized in April 2013. It will serve as a forum bringing together experts to engage interactively with each other and with delegations attending the meeting. Experts on the global economy and macroeconomic and development management could be identified from appropriate government institutions as well as from international organizations, academia, research institutions and civil society, as appropriate.

4. Expected outcomes

31. The possible outcomes of the multi-year expert meeting session on prospects for building resilience to external shocks and mitigating their impact on trade and development could include:

(a) Enhanced understanding of external shocks, in the context of building resilience and mitigating their impact on trade and development;

(b) Identification of possible policies and measures to build resilience to external shocks;

(c) Enhanced understanding of how statistics can help build resilience to external shocks and mitigate their impact on trade and development.

(b) Towards an enabling multilateral trading system for inclusive and sustainable development

Second session — December 2014[7]

1. Background

32. An open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system remains an integral part of an enabling economic environment. The effective integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system remains a priority, and ways and means should be found on how best to achieve this objective.

2. Objective

33. The objective of the multi-year expert meeting session is to exchange views, experiences and lessons learned regarding policies and measures at all levels to enhance the contribution of an enabling multilateral trading system in fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

3. Main issues

34. Issues that may be addressed in the multi-year expert meeting session include:

(a) Evolving contribution of trade and the multilateral trading system to inclusive growth and sustainable development;

(b) Measures needed to make trade integration inclusive and sustainable, and build productive capacities;

(c) Role of the multilateral trading system in containing all forms of protectionism;

(d) Analyse the impact of non-tariff measures/barriers on trade and development prospects of developing countries;

(e) Role of regional integration and cooperation, including South-South, triangular and other forms of cooperation, to complement the multilateral approaches in realizing an enabling environment;

(f) New and emerging issues on trade and development.

35. The session would be organized in December 2014. It could be organized in cooperation with the World Trade Organization, United Nations regional commissions and other cooperating agencies, as appropriate, to promote greater understanding of ideas, synergies and policy debates.

4. Expected outcomes

36. The possible outcomes of the multi-year expert meeting session on the topic "Towards an enabling multilateral trading system for inclusive and sustainable development" could include:

(a) Promote greater understanding as to how the multilateral trading system can contribute to inclusive and sustainable development;

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[7] The terms of reference for the second session of this multi-year expert meeting were approved by the President of the Trade and Development Board and Regional Coordinators on 6 February 2013.

(b) Enhanced understanding on how the multilateral trading system has contributed to the Millennium Development Goals and how this contribution can be considered and enhanced in the future implementation of internationally agreed development goals;

(c) Exchange of experiences and lessons in promoting a coherent and integrated approach to trade and inclusive and sustainable development at national, regional and international levels;

(d) Promote greater understanding on the impact of non-tariff measures/barriers on trade and development prospects of developing countries and identify possible ways and means of addressing them.

F. Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation[8]

1. Background

37. The Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation will address some emerging and persistent issues that developing countries are facing and which need to be dealt with as a matter of priority. The successful pre-Doha multi-year expert meetings on Transport and Trade Facilitation revealed that some countries still need specific attention in the area of transport and trade facilitation and that multilateral negotiations processes, such as the World Trade Organization Doha Round and the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) Conference, may bring new opportunities for progress in achieving trade logistics efficiency.

38. In accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Doha Mandate, the multi-year expert meeting will address trade logistics issues in developing countries, including those with special needs, namely the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS) and some countries with economies in transition. Drawing from UNCTAD's three pillars of work, discussions will consider all relevant aspects, namely technical assistance and capacity-building, research and analytical work and consensus building.

2. Objective

39. The ultimate objective of the multi-year expert meeting is to help identify policies and strategies that promote efficient and sustainable freight transport systems in line with the efforts to achieve sustainable development. Sustainability in freight transport requires a balancing act between economic, social and environmental considerations, and rests on the ability to provide fuel-efficient, cost-effective and safe and secure transport systems. This entails drawing from various sources of knowledge and expertise, including from existing best practices and know-how gained in the context of public-private partnership initiatives. The four sessions of this multi-year expert meeting will offer an opportunity for experts to explore in greater depth four distinctive subject areas.

40. To build on synergies and promote a coherent discussion, each session of the multi-year expert meeting will involve interdivisional coordination and will call upon different units of UNCTAD to contribute their specific expertise and knowledge. Sessions will also be organized in close collaboration with other

[8] The terms of reference for this multi-year expert meeting were approved by the President of the Trade and Development Board and Regional Coordinators on 6 February 2013.

relevant United Nations bodies and international organizations and partners, including the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade. To ensure greater relevance and to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field, consultation with other stakeholders and the private sector will also be considered, as deemed appropriate.

3. Main issues

41. The multi-year expert meeting will deal with the following issues:

(a) Transport and logistics innovation towards the review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014

First session — October 2013

42. Landlocked developing countries usually pay the highest transport and transit costs, as recognized in the Doha Mandate and in the Almaty Programme of Action. Transit developing countries increasingly realize that transit traffic to and from LLDCs brings the economic advantage of having additional trade to better utilize existing transport capacity. LLDCs and transit countries have a common interest in identifying opportunities which can benefit from increased economies of scale and the improvement of land transport systems and seaports. This session will look at how landlocked developing countries can identify transport and logistics opportunities to create win-win solutions with neighbouring transit developing countries. Experts will also review and evaluate the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, with emphasis on transit and logistics innovation. Lessons from regional, institutional and operational differences in transit corridor management and development will be examined. Challenges and best practices for the management and development of transit corridors will be highlighted. As a result of technological advances, better regional collaboration and a higher priority attached to trade facilitation, improved transit trade solutions are found. As technological advances become more accessible for developing countries, experts will assess possibilities to further improve the use of technologies in areas such as customs automation, port community systems, cargo tracking, or advance information processing.

(b) Trade facilitation rules as a trade enabler: options and requirements

Second session — April 2014

43. The increasing number of regional trade agreements on trade facilitation may pose additional challenges to trade facilitation, but may also promote reform and a further global harmonization of rules. Trade facilitation is receiving increasing attention and investment at national, regional and multilateral level. Experts would discuss and analyse trade facilitation implementation plans, ways to mainstream trade facilitation in the development strategies of LDCs and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies, and its impact on the trade, including trade balance, of some countries. There is a need to share experiences and best practices in trade and transport facilitation committees to ensure collaboration and coordination among stakeholders in the implementation of trade facilitation reforms. Customs automation programmes, such as the Automated System for Customs Data, as well as lessons learned from UNCTAD and other Annex D organizations and partners of the Global Facilitation Partnership in the development of trade facilitation implementation plans will also be addressed.

(c) Small island developing States: challenges in transport and trade logistics

Third session — December 2014

44. The session will address some of the particular transport and trade logistics challenges that SIDS face in connection with their remoteness and geographical location. SIDS share the same environmental and economic vulnerabilities and sustainable development challenges, such as susceptibility to natural disasters; vulnerability to external shocks; remoteness from large markets, low transport volumes and connectivity leading to high freight and logistics costs; and high economic dependency on sea and air transport links. Improved access to global markets and enhanced trade competitiveness is particularly important for these countries, as is ensuring the resilience of critical transport infrastructure. With SIDS being completely dependent on ports and airports, climate change risks such as rising sea levels, increasing temperatures and more frequent and/or intense storms pose serious threats to vital transport infrastructure, services and operations. Understanding the underlying risk and vulnerabilities and developing adequate adaptation measures is of the essence. Against this background, the strategic importance of ports for the growth and development of SIDS will be particularly highlighted.

(d) Sustainable freight transport systems: opportunities for developing countries

Fourth session — December 2015

45. The importance of freight transport as a trade enabler, engine of growth and a driver of social development is widely recognized, but its growing activity poses a concern in view of adverse effects on the environment and the climate, namely due to the sector's current resource consumption patterns and related implications for fuel efficiency and emissions. Complying with the Doha Mandate on transport and the added political momentum provided by the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the multi-year expert meeting will address the challenges and the opportunities associated with sustainable freight transport systems and identify some best practices in the fields of environment-friendly transport, energy conservation, and efficient supply chains and logistics systems. The event will also emphasize the financial implications of implementing sustainable freight transport systems, explore potential new sources of finance, such as climate finance, and address a greater involvement of the private sector, notably through public-private partnerships and other innovative procurement and financing schemes.

4. Expected outcome

46. The experts will aim at:

(a) Contributing to a better understanding of benefits and costs related to (i) transport and trade facilitation, (ii) sustainable freight transport systems, and (iii) building climate resilience of transport systems, including the adaptation requirements associated with climate change;

(b) Contributing to a better understanding of (i) the likely impact of trade facilitation and customs automation programmes on the trade of developing countries including LDCs and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies as well as (ii) the importance of mainstreaming trade facilitation implementation plans in development strategies;

(c) Identifying best practices, approaches and policy recommendations, including financing measures to promote sustainable freight transport systems, and to

improve trade logistics services and trade facilitation, including through involvement of the private sector;

(d) Identifying areas for further research and analysis on issues relevant to freight transport and trade facilitation;

(e) Further strengthening the existing collaboration among networks of transport and trade facilitation experts;

(f) Providing customs, maritime and port authorities as well as policymakers and negotiators with a better understanding of regional and multilateral agreements in the fields of freight transport and trade facilitation and of the implementation of the resulting commitments, including through regional collaboration mechanisms.

5. Target participants

47. Experts to be invited to the multi-year expert meeting will include those from ministries and agencies dealing with trade, trade logistics, transport and auxiliary services, including customs. Experts will also come from other intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector, including traders, industry, transport service providers and international financial institutions.

II. Explanatory notes for single-year expert meetings[9]

A. Tourism's Contribution to Sustainable Development

1. Background

48. Cross-border travel for recreational and leisure purposes has become one of the fastest-growing economic activities worldwide. In many developing countries, tourism has not only become an important activity within the services sector but also an important source of employment and economic growth. This holds particularly true for the least developed countries and other developing economies that are endowed with natural and historical assets conducive to tourism activities.

49. The expert meeting will provide an opportunity to examine what developing countries need to do to build a sustainable tourism sector that contributes to structural transformation, inclusive economic development and poverty reduction. Therein sustainability refers to the economic, sociocultural and environmental aspects of tourism development. Further, the meeting aims to address linkages that tourism creates with different sectors, such as agriculture or construction, and to discuss mechanisms of how to make tourism beneficial to local communities.

50. The agenda will build on several institutional mandates, predominantly the Doha Mandate, the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

2. Objective

51. Contribute to the development of environmentally and socially sustainable tourism sectors.

[9] The terms of reference for these single-year expert meetings were approved by the Extended Bureau of the Trade and Development Board on 26 November 2012.

3. Main issues

52. Given the multifaceted nature of tourism, the meeting will address a wider range of issues, including the following:

(a) Environmental sustainability (e.g. environmental protection);

(b) Social sustainability (e.g. local community development and the role of women in sustainable tourism);

(c) Strengthening of cross-sectoral linkages;

(d) Enterprise development and investment attraction;

(e) Infrastructure development;

(f) Human resources policies;

(g) Laws and guidance to promote tourism;

(h) Mainstreaming tourism in national development plans;

(i) Role of South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, including the role of development banks, in promoting and developing sustainable tourism sectors.

4. Expected outcome

53. Identify key issues and policy options related to the role of tourism for economic development, for consideration by the Trade and Development Commission.

5. Target participants

54. Tourism experts from member countries (government officials, private-sector representatives, civil society), academics, members of the United Nations Steering Committee on Tourism for Development.[10]

55. While UNCTAD will be the lead agency of the expert meeting, some sessions could be jointly organized with agencies of the Steering Committee.

B. Assessing the Impact of Public-Private Partnerships on Trade and Development in Developing Countries

1. Objectives

56. Public-private partnerships can play an important role in ensuring that participation in global supply chains is conducive to the sustainable growth and development of developing countries and the building of the local supply capacity by developing countries' small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage and scale-up in these chains. The meeting will identify ways and means in which public-private partnerships in developing countries can help build local supply capacity, including through infrastructure development, and establish linkages between local producers and global supply chains, in particular in the agriculture and commodities sectors, with a view to drawing policy lessons. Every effort will be made to involve

[10] International Labour Organization, International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization.

other relevant international organizations, regional commissions and regional development banks in the meeting.

2. Expected outcome

57. The expert meeting is expected to contribute to a better understanding of ways and means in which public-private partnerships in developing countries can help build local supply capacity, including through infrastructure development, and establish linkages between local producers and global supply chains. The expert meeting is also expected to result in an inventory of best practices in terms of addressing the challenges and difficulties faced by developing countries' SMEs in this regard, in particular in the agriculture and commodities sectors. Such understanding and inventory will help in the design of related policies and programmes in developing countries.